

VZCZCXRO7667  
RR RUEHAST RUEHDBU  
DE RUEHTA #0567/01 3180202  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 140202Z NOV 06  
FM AMEMBASSY ASTANA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7662  
INFO RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1640  
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 7770  
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT 7733  
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 7054  
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 1935  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1338  
RUEHAST/USOFFICE ALMATY  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2149

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASTANA 000567

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KZ](#)

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: ALMATY NOTES, SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER

¶1. This is the first in a series of bi-weekly roundup cables on political developments in Almaty, Kazakhstan's "southern capital." The series is intended to maintain focus on developments in civil society, the media, and the opposition following the Embassy's move to Astana. Items were drawn primarily from the local press and media.

#### Rally Following Riot in Shanyrak district in Almaty

-----

¶2. On September 23, the Alga political party and the Committee in Support of Shanyrak district residents organized a sanctioned rally on the outskirts of Almaty, behind the Saryarka cinema. The rally was organized to support Almaty residents whose houses had been demolished or faced demolition. According to Aynur Kurmanov of Socialist Resistance, about 600 people, including residents of Bakay and Shanyrak, participated in the peaceful rally. However, according to correspondent of Tazhargan newspaper Bakhytgul Makembay, three buses carrying Bakay and Shanyrak residents to the rally site were stopped by the road police and detained for technical reasons. The residents had to use other vehicles to get to the site. According to noted Kazakh nationalist Dos Koshim, the head of the Shanyrak committee, 16 people accused of organizing the July 14 Shanyrak riot and taking a hostage are currently under arrest. Three other participants of the skirmish were set free upon their written promise not to leave the city. A national-level commission was set up to investigate the situation.

¶3. According to Kurmanov, on September 20 the Turksib district court in Almaty tried two young residents of Bakay, Ilyas Tompakov and Nurkhat Mukazhanov, who resisted the police during the July 7 demolitions. The young people, charged with using violence against a representative of the authorities, were sentenced to two years in prison and fined 100,000 tenge (\$800) each.

#### Activists Hold Unauthorized Rally

-----

¶4. On October 6, five activists from Socialist Resistance were detained in Almaty while picketing the Almaty City Police office. According to the movement's October 11 press release, the young people were delivering a protest petition about repression of the residents of the Shanyrak district. The five participants of the protest action were taken to the city administrative court, which sentenced "Epokha" journalist Daniyar Yenikeev to 10 days in jail. The other participants were fined. According to the press release, the judge denied the detainees' requests for lawyers and several journalists were not allowed in the courtroom.

¶5. The police reportedly detained several of Yenikeev's associates

who gathered near the detention center on October 14, holding them for three hours. When Yenikeev was released on October 16, the police reportedly detained four of his colleagues who came to meet him. They were held overnight; the following day, the Interdistrict Economic Court sentenced Socialist Resistance leader Aynur Kurmanov to five days detention.

#### Almaty Akim Says Illegal Buildings "Should be Burned"

-----

¶6. "Illegal buildings in Almaty should be burned down. Instead of doing this we are appealing to courts and procurators. It takes 5-6 months. We have no time. If it is an illegal building and there are no documents, heavy vehicles should be brought in to demolish it. Afterwards, let them go to court," Almaty City Akim Tasmagambetov stated at a seating of the city administration on October 18. According to data from the city administration, 140 illegal buildings under construction were discovered between July 17 and October 17. 58 cases on illegal construction have been sent to the city administrative court, which has issued a demolition ruling in only two cases to date. (Interfax, October 18)

#### Ak Zhol Leader Takes Seat in Parliament

-----

¶7. On September 24, the Ak Zhol party held a congress in Almaty. In addition to the political situation in the country, concerns about draft labor code, and recommendations on how to raise Kazakhstan's competitiveness, the congress discussed the issue of the vacant seat in the Mazhilis that the party won in 2004. (At that time, party leaders refused to take the seat in protest against the falsified election results.) The congress decided to send a representative to the Mazhilis, but did not specify who that person

ASTANA 00000567 002 OF 002

would be. On October 3, the Central Election Commission announced that it had registered party leader Alikhan Baymenov, who was number one on the party list in 2004, as a member of the Mazhilis.

¶8. No opposition papers criticized the move. Otan parliamentary leader Amzebek Zholshibekov was quote as "hailing" Ak Zhol's decision, saying that Baymenov's "desk is ready and all the committees are ready to accept him." Independent journalist Valeriy Surganov, in his report on the Ak Zhol congress ([www.zonakz.net](http://www.zonakz.net), September 27), commented that taking the seat should be merely a technical issue since the party appeared to have consulted with the Presidential Administration in advance. Surganov also commented that Ak Zhol is a party of and for ethnic Kazakhs, as 90% of its members are Kazakhs. "Following Zharmakhan Tuyakbay, who in his program speech had promised to defend interests, first of all, of ethnic Kazakhs, the chairman of Ak Zhol stated almost the same using different language. For example, he recommended that K Cell and K Mobile companies extend their services covering especially the rural areas, Kazakh villages."

#### Opposition Supports Kazakhstan's OSCE Bid

-----

¶9. At a September 26 round table organized by Galymzhan Zhakiyanov, the opposition made a joint statement on Kazakhstan's bid to chair the OSCE. The majority of opposition activists decided to support the bid if Kazakhstan introduces amendments providing for basic political rights and freedoms proclaimed by the constitution. These include: the right to hold meetings, rallies, marches and picketing through a system of notification rather than permission; the right to free distribution of information and the revocation of media law amendments adopted in May; the introduction of the draft mass media law prepared by journalists; implementation of OSCE/ODIHR recommendations on election legislation; a halt to politically motivated prosecutions and the freeing of political prisoners. Zhakiyanov, in his comments on the statement, said: "In this case we are talking about [getting] at least minimal changes and improvements in the country." According to political leaders, in the current situation Kazakhstan has no right to the chairmanship. However, the withdrawal of the bid would limit the political

maneuvering of dissidents. Alga and Ak Zhol issued similar statements of support. (Channel-31, September 26, and Svoboda Slova, September 28)

#### NGOs Propose Creation of Public TV

-----

¶10. On October 17 in Almaty, representatives of the Union of Journalists, True Ak Zhol, and the Adil Soz media freedom NGO organized a round table to discuss the concept of public television. Participants discussed whether public TV will function along with general state TV channels, what the requirements are for members of the board of directors of the public TV, who will elect or appoint the board of directors, whether the legislation on public TV should include specific guiding criteria like objectivity, and who will finance public TV. Opinions were varied, with Patriots Party leader Ganiy Kasymov opining that the government should establish public television. The participants agreed to set up a working group on the public TV concept. (Interfax, October 17 and zonakz.net, October 20)

#### True Ak Zhol protests detention of its activists

-----

¶11. On October 27, the True Ak Zhol political party issued a statement protesting the illegal detention of party activists in Atyrau Oblast. The police in Atyrau Oblast detained six activists of the party on October 25 and 27. The activists were accused of making and disseminating leaflets calling for unsanctioned rally on October 27 and calling for the resignation of oblast akim B. Ryskaliyev. According to the statement, the police could produce no official documents specifying the grounds for the arrests. The police allegedly did not allow the detainees to see their relatives, lawyers, or associates.

ORDWAY